

THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN SOLIDI OF THEOPHILUS¹

ANDREAS DIKIGOROPOULOS

THEOPHILUS had been crowned co-emperor by his father Michael II on the day of his marriage to Theodora, 12 May 821.² He succeeded his father as sole emperor, in October of the eighth indiction,³ that is, in October 829, and died on 20 January 842.⁴ During his reign five types of Constantinopolitan solidi were issued:

I. Theophilus on the obverse, with his son Constantine and his father Michael II on the reverse⁵ (figs. 1-3).

II. Theophilus on the obverse, with his son Constantine (as *despotes*) on the reverse (fig. 6).

III. Theophilus on the obverse, with the inscription CYRIEBOHΘHTO CΘΔOYLO around a patriarchal cross on the reverse⁶ (figs. 7-9).

IV. Theophilus, his wife Theodora, his daughter Thecla on the obverse; his daughters Anna and Anastasia on the reverse (fig. 11).

V. Theophilus on the obverse, with his son Michael III (as *despotes*) on the reverse (fig. 12).

¹ This paper has, I am sure, benefited from the objective criticism of Professors Romilly Jenkins and Cyril Mango; and whilst I remain responsible for the views expressed and the proposals made, I should like to express my appreciation and thanks to both of them. I am also grateful to Mr. Philip Grierson, not only for reading the typescript, but also for letting me make use of his extensive notes on the coinage of this period. The analysis and discussion of the Lagbe Hoard in particular is largely based on his observations.

² E. W. Brooks, "The Marriage of the Emperor Theophilus," *BZ*, 10 (1901), 542; E. Stein, "Post-Consulat et Αυτοκρατορία," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales*, 2 (1934), 899.

³ Theophanes Continuatus (Bonn ed.), 84, henceforth referred to as *Cont.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁵ Imitations of this type are also known in silver. There is one at Dumbarton Oaks (fig. 3).

⁶ There is also a semissis of this type at Dumbarton Oaks (fig. 9). A type V semissis is also known from the Münzen und Medaillen A. G., Basel, Sale XIII (17. 6. 54), no. 854.

Types I and III are common and evidently represent the main issues of the reign. Types II, IV, and V are exceedingly rare and must have been struck to commemorate special occasions.⁷

The chronology of the Constantinopolitan coinage of Theophilus in general and of the solidi in particular is, to a large extent, dependent upon the scanty and often contradictory evidence of contemporary or subsequent literary sources relating to the family of the Emperor.

The only literary evidence we have of the existence of Theophilus' son Constantine is an incidental reference to his coffin, in the church of the Holy Apostles, by Constantine Porphyrogenitus.⁸ The fact that Porphyrogenitus uses the word λαρνάκιον in respect of Constantine's coffin, as against λάρναξ which he uses for the coffins of emperors who are known to have died at a mature age, suggests that Constantine died young, but how young we cannot tell. All other contemporary and later sources fail to mention Constantine.⁹

Apart from the daughters represented on the solidi of type IV, Theophilus and Theodora had two other daughters, Maria and Pulcheria. Of these, Pulcheria seems to have been the youngest.¹⁰ Maria is described by Theophanes Continuatus as πασῶν τῇν ἑσ-

⁷ I owe this suggestion to Mr. Philip Grierson.

⁸ *De Cerimoniis* (Bonn ed.), 645 ... ἑτερον λαρνάκιον πράσινον ἐν ᾧ ἀπόκειται Κωνσταντίνος ὁ υἱὸς Θεοφίλου. In his edition of the *De Cerimoniis*, II, Commentary, 2, note 2, A. Vogt, failing to appreciate the significance and strength of the numismatic evidence, questions the existence of Constantine.

⁹ It is not impossible that the royal son who, according to Continuatus, was drowned in that part of the palace which Theophilus had converted into gardens (*Cont.*, 88) may have been Theophilus' own son Constantine.

¹⁰ This is evident from the story related by Continuatus about Theoktiste's veneration of icons and her influence on the daughters of Theophilus (*Cont.*, 90).

χάτην¹¹ and the favorite of her father, who, being without male issue had her married to Alexius Mousele, a man in the prime of his life (ἀκμάζων τὴν ἡλικίαν), whom he honored by promoting him first to the ranks of patricius and anthypatus and εἰς τὸ ἔσχατον, to those of magister and Caesar.¹² According to the same chronicler, not long after his elevation to the Caesarship, Alexius was sent by Theophilus to Longobardia, but following the death of Maria and the birth of Michael III he gave up public life for that of a monk. Continuatus claims that Alexius had expressed the wish to become a monk before the death of Maria, following malicious accusations of disloyalty against him, and that Theophilus did not allow him to do so on the grounds that he did not wish to see his daughter a widow. After the death of Maria, so Continuatus relates, Alexius took his monastic vows secretly and against the wishes of the Emperor who, failing to persuade him to renounce the monastic habit, endowed him with a number of royal monasteries.¹³ This story is at odds with the one given by the various versions of the chronicle of Symeon Logothetes. According to this source, Theophilus, having made Alexius his son in law and having promoted him to the rank of patricius and soon afterward to that of magister, then, becoming suspicious of his aspirations, sent him to Sicily. From there, following accusations against him by jealous Sicilians, Theophilus recalled him after the death of Maria. Upon Alexius' return to Constantinople, Theophilus, despite his written promises of clemency, which he had transmitted through the Archbishop Theodorus Krithinus, had Alexius imprisoned and his property confiscated. The Emperor, through the intervention of the Patriarch,¹⁴ was finally per-

suaded to restore his property and to allow Alexius to become a monk.

With one exception, none of the above sources provides explicit dates for either the death of Maria or the birth of Michael. The exception is Pseudo-Symeon Magister, who dates the death of Maria to the third year of Theophilus,¹⁵ and the birth of Michael to his tenth.¹⁶ The dating of Pseudo-Symeon Magister cannot, however, be relied upon.¹⁷

The birth of Michael between 20 January 839 and 19 January 840 is implied by Theophanes Continuatus in his statement that at the time of his accession to the throne, on 20 January 842, Michael was in his third year (τὸ τρίτον ἔτος διανύων).¹⁸ This statement seems to be corroborated by a note written in the extreme top margin of folio 268 of MS gr. 16 in the University Library at Leipzig, which contains the chronicle of Joseph Genesius. The manuscript itself may date from the eleventh or twelfth century, but the marginal note is undoubtedly later and may date from the fourteenth century. It reads:

ἡ γέννησις Μιχαὴλ τοῦ υἱοῦ Θεοφίλου ἦν μ(ηνί) Ἰανου(αρίου) Θ ἐπὶ (Ι) ἐν ἔτει ᾿ϚΤΜ(Η) ὦ(ρα) νυκτ,(ὸς) πρ(ώτη).

The birth of Michael, the son of Theophilus, occurred on the 9th to the 10th of the month of January, in the year 6348, in the first hour of the night.

The last letter in the year of the creation has partially run off the folio, but what remains compares fairly well with the H in HN after ΘΕΟΦΙΛΩ, a fact suggesting that the year should be 6348, in which case, Michael's birthday would be 9 January 840.¹⁹

by E. Murlt (1859), 703–5, henceforth referred to as *CGM-M*; *Leo Grammaticus*, (Bonn ed.), 216–8, henceforth referred to as *LeoG*; *Th. Melitenus*, (ed. by Th. Tafel), 149–50, henceforth referred to as *Melit.*; *Symeon Magister*, (Bonn ed.), 630–2, henceforth referred to as *S.Mag.* The contemporary chronicle of *George the Monk* (ed. by de Boor), has no information at all on Alexius Mousele.

¹⁵ *S.Mag.*, 630.

¹⁶ *S.Mag.*, 637.

¹⁷ A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I (1935), 136, note 2.

¹⁸ *Cont.*, 148.

¹⁹ F. Steinmann, in *Viz. Vrem.*, 21 (1914), 22–3, cited by A. P. Kazhdan in *Viz. Vrem.*, N. S., 21 (1962), 96, note 8; Kazhdan agrees with Steinmann's reading of the marginal note against

¹¹ *Cont.*, 107. J. B. Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire from the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I, 802–867* (London, 1912), 466, like Brooks, *op. cit.*, 540, considered ἐσχάτη to have been used with the meaning of the youngest. It is more probable, however, that the word was used to denote humility, in the sense that Maria was the most humble; cf. Liddell and Scott for this meaning of the word.

¹² *Cont.*, 107–8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 108–9.

¹⁴ *Continuator of George the Monk* (Bonn ed.), 794–6, henceforth referred to as *CGM*; *idem*, ed.

Two inlaid silver monograms on the bronze doors of the *horologion* of St. Sophia in Constantinople tend to support the evidence of Theophanes Continuatus and of the marginal note in the Leipzig manuscript. One gives the name ΜΙΧΑΗΛ and is quartered ΔΕ ΣΠΟ Τ Η (fig. 14); the other reads ΚΟCΜΔ and is quartered 'CΤ ΜΘ ΙΝΔ Δ (fig. 15), which is the year 6349, Indiction 4, or A.D. 840/1. The first monogram was superimposed over an earlier one which read ΙΩΑΝΝΔ or ΙΩΑΝΝΗ, the word ΔΕ ΣΠΟ Τ Η being substituted for [ΠΑ] ΠΙ Δ Χ[8]. Traces of an earlier monogram and quartering are still visible. In the second monogram only the quartering was altered; originally this may have read 'CΤ ΜΖ ΙΝ ΔΒ that is, the year 6347, Indiction 2, or A.D. 838/9. At the time when the name of Michael was substituted for that of the Patriarch, the numeral letter in the second quarter was altered into Θ; the last letter of the fourth quarter was erased and—if the above reading of the original quartering is correct—the Δ of the indiction, in the same quarter, was changed into a numeral; at the same time, the little *delta* above ΙΝ, in the third quarter, may have been inlaid to clarify the reading of that quarter as ἰνδικτιῶνος.²⁰ Assuming this to have been the case, Michael III was born between September 838, at the earliest, and September 840. He could scarcely have been born earlier, for, had this been the case, he would doubtless have been associated with his father and mother whose names survive

unaltered on two other similar monograms on the same doors.²¹

However, it is not impossible that the little *delta* above the ΙΝ, in the third quarter of the date monogram, may be original and that the fourth quarter originally contained a two-letter numeral for the indiction. The first letter would then be Ι—this would also explain the surviving stroke in the Δ introduced in 840/1—and the second may have been Ε, and Ε may also have been the letter which Θ replaced in the second quarter of the same monogram. If this hypothesis is correct, then the date at which John the Grammatician's name was inlaid in association with the names of Theophilus and Theodora would be 6345, Indiction 15, that is A.D. 836/7, or, more precisely, A.D. 837, at the time of John's accession to the patriarchal throne on January 21 of that year,²² an event which he may have wanted to commemorate. If this was the case, the birth of Michael should be placed after 21 April 837 and before September 840;²³ and the evidence of Theophanes Continuatus and of the marginal note in the Leipzig manuscript becomes questionable.

In fact, the account of the fortunes of Alexius Mousele related by Continuatus implies that Michael was born before 839. On the evidence of the turn of events in Sicily, Alexius seems to have been there in the spring of 838, when he may have been responsible for the Byzantine victory at Cefalu,²⁴ but he seems to have left the island before the end of that year, by which time the Arabs had regained the offensive.²⁵ If so,

H. Waschke, who, in "Genesios," *Philologus*, 37 (1877), 261–2, had read the date of the marginal note as 6 January 839. My reading of the note is based on a microfilm of MS gr. 16 kindly furnished by the University Library, Leipzig.

²⁰ The view that 'CΤ ΜΘ ΙΝΔ Δ replaced 'CΤ ΜΖ ΙΝ ΔΒ was first proposed by C. G. Curtis and S. Aristarches in the *Ελληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, Παρνασσός*, 16, Supplement (1885), 30; it was accepted by W. R. Lethaby and H. Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople* (London, 1894), 271 and fig. 69; by E. M. Antoniadēs "Ἐκφρασις τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας, I (1907), 148–9; and by E. H. Swift, "The Bronze Doors of the Horologium of Haghia Sophia," *Art Bulletin*, 19 (1937), 137 and fig. 1; and by a number of other scholars. Professor Cyril Mango, who was kind enough to examine the monograms at Constantinople for me in June 1963, agrees with the above reading.

²¹ For illustrations of these and of the remaining monograms, cf. the bibliography cited in note 20, *supra*, and W. Salzenberg, *Altchristliche Baudenkmäler von Konstantinopel* (Berlin, 1857), pl. 19, figs. 1–4.

²² Pseudo-Symeon Magister (*S. Mag.*, 635) gives the year as the eighth of Theophilus; Continuatus (*Cont.*, 121) does not give the year but dates John's coronation to Sunday, 21 April; for the correct date, cf. V. Grumel, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, I (1936), 42.

²³ I cannot explain why the name of John, who remained in office until 843, was replaced with that of Michael in 840/1.

²⁴ Vasiliev, *op. cit.* (note 17 *supra*), 136, 144, 440; Bury, *op. cit.* (note 11 *supra*), 231; M. Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, I (1933), 442.

²⁵ Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, (note 17 *supra*), 137, 144, 182, 441; Amari, *op. cit.*, 42.

and if the evidence of Theophanes Continuatus that Michael was born before the return of Alexius is correct, his birth should be dated to 838, between the spring and the end of that year.

The birth of Michael in 838 may also be deduced from his age at, or shortly before, his murder on 24 September 867. For this we have two sources: the *Life of Theodora* and a passage in the eighteenth homily of Photius. The *Life of Theodora* gives the age of Michael at the time of his murder as 29,²⁶ the implication being that he had completed that year.

The passage in the eighteenth homily of Photius, delivered in September at the Council of 867, is not completely explicit. It refers to Michael III as the Church's beloved son whom εἰς τοῦτο τὸ μέτρον τὸ κατὰ Χριστὸν ἡλικίας προήγαγε.²⁷ Photius may have been comparing Michael's age to that of Christ. If so, the comparison may have been made with Christ's age at the time of His Crucifixion or with His age at the time of the beginning of His Ministry. The first alternative seems inconceivable, for it could hardly have been made, and would certainly have no meaning, unless the Emperor had been dead.²⁸ The second alternative seems more

²⁶ ... χρόνων ὧν εἴκοσι ἐννέα... Cf. A. Regel, *Analecta Byzantinorussica* (1891), 15. It should be noted, however, that the same *Life* gives the age of Michael as 5½ at the time of his accession to the throne (Regel, *ibid.*, 11), which if true would put the date of his birth in the summer of 836. And, although the same *Life* and the *De Theophili imperatoris absolutio* (Regel, *ibid.*, 12, 21), in their accounts of the rehabilitation of images by Michael and Theodora, give Michael's age as 5½ at the time of the restoration of icons, and would thus put the date of his birth in, or soon after, September 837, the chronology of these texts cannot be relied upon without independent corroboration. For other mistakes in the chronology of this *Life*, cf. Regel's comments.

²⁷ C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius* (1958), 309.

²⁸ Irrespective of what modern scholars may consider the age of Christ to have been at the time of His Crucifixion, Photius must have believed, as all Byzantines seem to have, that Christ died in his thirty-third year (cf. *Chronicon Paschale* (Bonn ed.), 408; *George the Monk* (ed. by de Boor), 299–300, 312; all versions of the chronicle of Symeon Logothetes as well as later Byzantine chroniclers such as Cedrenus and Zonaras). Had Photius believed Michael III to be in his thirty-third year, he would have known or thought that he had been born before Sep-

tember 835, and this does not seem very plausible. However, it is not impossible that Photius was using μέτρον ἡλικίας in the same sense as St. Paul had used it (*Ephesians* 4:13), in which case no chronological implications would have been involved in the comparison.

Some south Italian *diplomata* of the reign of Michael III, which place the beginning of his reign between April and September 838, also indicate September 838 as a *terminus ante quem* for the birth of Michael.²⁹ It is true that these documents refer to Michael's regnal years and can more safely be used in determining the date of his coronation than the date of his birth; but there is no real reason why these two dates should be separated by a lengthy period of time, and every indication that they were not. In all likelihood, Theophilus, who, having lost his first son and heir Constantine, had his son-in-law Alexius Mousele created Caesar, thus giving him the right to succeed to the throne, must have been anxious to confer this right upon his second son when he was born, and would not have waited long to have him crowned co-emperor. The coronation of Michael III shortly after his birth is again attested by Photius in the same eighteenth homily, where he refers to Michael as having been adopted *from the very cradle*³⁰ and made emperor by the Church.

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²⁹ Cf. Stein, *op. cit.*, (note 2 *supra*), 899, note 2, citing *Codex Diplomaticus Cavensis*, I, nos. 21, 22, and 25. These diplomata do not by any means confirm the unreliable evidence of the *Life of St. Theodora*, that Michael III was born in 836, as Stein proposed and others have agreed: Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, Eng. ed. (1956), 194, note 1, and Mango, *op. cit.*, (note 27 *supra*), 309, note 17.

³⁰ ... ὃν ἐξ αὐτῶν σπαργάνων, εἰς υἱὸν θεμένη καὶ βασιλέα σου... Mango, *op. cit.* (note 27, *supra*), 309; cf. also Basil Laourdas, Φωτίου 'Ομιλίας, *Hellenika, Supplement* 12 (1939), 175.^{29–30}

A more precise date for the birth of Michael may be arrived at from the evidence of two of the surviving versions of the chronicle of Symeon Logothetes, the chronicle of Theodosius Melitenus and the interpolated version of the chronicle of George the Monk. Both refer to the birth of Michael immediately following the account of the defeat of Theophilus at Dazimon and before the Arab sack of Amorium.³¹ The defeat of Theophilus at Dazimon is dated by Arab sources 22 July 838,³² the sack of Amorium 12 August 838.³³ If the evidence of the above two chronicles may be relied upon, then the birth of Michael may be dated to the period between 22 July and 12 August 838.

All versions of the chronicle of Symeon Logothetes place Michael's coronation after the sack of Amorium.³⁴ Most probably it was celebrated at the same time as some other religious ceremony, perhaps his baptism, which may have taken place on the first Sunday in September, which in 838 happened to be the first of the month and thus also the beginning of a new indiction.³⁵

The inconsistency between the evidence of the sources and that of the coinage regarding the family of Theophilus has been discussed by various writers, notably Wroth,³⁶ Bury,³⁷ Ostrogorsky and Stein,³⁸ and Bellinger.³⁹

The chronological arrangement of the Constantinopolitan solidi of Theophilus proposed by the above writers is as follows:

TYPE	CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT		
	<i>Wroth</i>	<i>Bellinger</i>	<i>Bury</i> ⁴⁰
I	?832-?839	833-837	830
II	?832-?839	832	830
III	829-?832	829-831	831-838 ⁴¹
IV	Oct. 829 or later	838	838/?9
V	840-842	839-Jan. 842	840-842.

Wroth considered that Type III solidi constituted the first issue of Theophilus' reign, because, in his view, Theophilus had no son when he succeeded to the throne. For similar reasons he attributed Type IV solidi to the beginning of the reign. He placed Constantine's birth in *ca.* 832 and, following Theophanes Continuatus, that of Michael III in 839. He does not seem to have allowed for time between Constantine's death and the birth of Michael.

Commenting on Wroth's classification, Bury observed that a difficulty connected with the marriage of Maria, which Wroth had not taken into account, bears on the interpretation of the numismatic data.⁴² Since Theophilus had been married in the spring of 821, Bury pointed out, the birth of his first child could not be dated before January 822. If Maria was the first child—and this Bury thought was the only reasonable solution—she could not have been married before 836, by which time she would have been fourteen years old.⁴³ Bury, like every other writer who has had occasion to comment on Porphyrogenitus' account of the triumphal celebrations of Theophilus,⁴⁴ believed that the celebrations described by Porphyrogenitus as the first, took place in 831, and that the Caesar mentioned by Porphyrogenitus as riding side by side with Theophilus was his son-in-law, Alexius Mousele, whom he had promoted to that honor following his betrothal to Maria in that year. Since at that time the honor of being Caesar carried with it the expectation of succeeding to the throne if the Emperor

³¹ *Melit.*, 154; *CGM-M.*, 711.

³² Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, (note 17 *supra*), 156, 441.

³³ Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 170, 441.

³⁴ *CGM-M.*, 716; *LeoG.*, 223; *Melit.*, 158; *S.Mag.*, 645.

³⁵ The coronation of Michael could not have preceded his baptism. It is not unlikely that 1 September may also have coincided with the lapse of forty days of purification usually allowed between birth and the taking of a religious sacrament, in which case Michael's birth could be dated to 23 July 838.

³⁶ W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum* (henceforth referred to as *BMC*), I (1908), xlii-xliii, and II, 418-24.

³⁷ Bury, *op. cit.*, (note 11 *supra*), Appendix VI, 465-8.

³⁸ G. Ostrogorsky and E. Stein, "Die Krönungsordnungen des Zeremonienbuches," *Byzantion*, 7 (1932), 185-223, especially 229-32.

³⁹ A. R. Bellinger, "The Emperor Theophilus and the Lagbe Hoard," *Berytus*, 8 (1944), 102-6.

⁴⁰ Bury's chronological arrangement is followed by Ostrogorsky and Stein.

⁴¹ Bury does not date Type III solidi, but the implication is that these formed the main issue after the death of Constantine and before the issue of Type IV solidi, which he dates to 838/9.

⁴² Bury, *op. cit.* (note 11 *supra*), 466.

⁴³ Bury, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ *De Cerimoniis* (Bonn ed.), 505, 14.

had no direct male heir,⁴⁵ and since it was Mousele who, in 831, rode beside Theophilus, it followed, so Bury thought, that the Emperor must not then have had a son. In Bury's opinion, Constantine could not have been born after 831, for had this been the case Theophilus probably would not have proceeded with Maria's wedding and Alexius probably would have been degraded much earlier than he was. Therefore, Bury concluded, Constantine was born before or just after the accession of Theophilus and was dead before the betrothal of Maria; hence his proposal that our Type I and II solidi should be dated to the period before Maria's betrothal, i.e., to a period of twelve months or so. Our Type IV solidi are dated by Bury to 838/9 after the death of Maria, which he dates to 837/8, for he thought that if Maria had been alive she would also have been represented on these coins.

Following the discovery of the Lagbe hoard, which contained only one solidus of Type I and thirty-five of Type III, Prof. Bellinger considered Bury's classification unacceptable. He did not think it was reasonable for the hoard to contain thirty-five solidi of the period 831-838 and only one of a type dated by Bury to 830, since "the coins of Theophilus, Constantine, and Michael, of which we have no specimens [in the hoard] are commoner than the type of which we have thirty-five."⁴⁶ Bellinger thus fell back on Wroth's view that Constantine was born after 831, in which year, on the evidence of Pseudo-Symeon Magister,⁴⁷ Alexius was betrothed, and, like Wroth, Bellinger proposed that Type I solidi superseded those of Type III. He did, however, accept Bury's classification of Type IV solidi. Bellinger dated the burial of the Lagbe hoard to 832 and connected it with the capture of Lulun, "the fortress

guarding the northern entrance to the Cilician gates," by Mamum.⁴⁸

Admittedly the proportion in the Lagbe hoard of only one solidus of Theophilus with Michael II and Constantine as against thirty-five of Theophilus alone does not seem reasonable. It is doubtful, however, whether the composition of the hoard is sufficiently representative to justify drawing any conclusions from its evidence. The contents of the Lagbe hoard can be summarized as follows:

<i>Emperor</i>		<i>No. of coins</i>
Leo III	(717-741)	3
Constantine V	(741-775)	26
Leo IV	(775-780)	4
Constantine VI	(780-797)	1
Irene	(797-802)	—
Nicephorus I	(802-811)	15
Michael I	(811-813)	2
Leo V	(813-820)	10
Michael II	(820-829)	5
Theophilus	(829-842)	36
<i>Total:</i>		102

It is inconceivable that such a hoard could represent coins withdrawn from circulation at random at the time of the burial. Solidi of Constantine V, who had been dead for over half a century at the time the hoard was buried, could not possibly have formed twenty-five per cent of the gold coins in every-day use, since all the rulers of this period struck gold in quantity. Professor Bellinger's suggestion that the hoarder had a weakness for coins of iconoclastic emperors, and deliberately excluded those of iconodules is also unacceptable; for although no coins of Irene were included in the hoard, Irene was not the only iconodule ruler. An iconoclast who carried his religious predilections to the point of refusing the coins of iconodules would have been compelled to dispense with those of

⁴⁵ Cf. R. Guiland "Le Césarât," *Or. Chr. Per.*, 13 (1947), 172. Bury does not expressly state this but he assumes it, and not without cause, since it is implied by Continuatius (*Cont.*, 107), who gives as a reason for the marriage of Maria to Alexius the fact that Theophilus had no son.

⁴⁶ Bellinger, *op. cit.* (note 39, *supra*), 104. This statement is incorrect; one solidus of Theophilus with his father Michael II and his son Constantine is included in the Lagbe hoard.

⁴⁷ Bellinger, *op. cit.*, 105, citing *MPG*, 109, col. 692.

⁴⁸ Bellinger, *op. cit.*, 106, citing Bury, *op. cit.* (note 11 *supra*), 245 ff., and 474. It is difficult to see how the hoard could have been buried in 832 and yet contain a solidus of a type dated by Professor Bellinger to the years 833-7. The hoard is more likely to have been buried at the time of the Arab expedition culminating in the occupation of Ancyra and the sack of Amorium in July and August 838. It should be noted that Lagbe lies in the Anatolikon theme, whose capital was Amorium.

Nicephorus and Michael I as well as those of Irene,⁴⁹ and he would certainly have arranged to secure a higher proportion of coins of Leo IV, who was as good an iconoclast as his father and whose coins are common.

The Lagbe hoard cannot, in fact, represent coins withdrawn from circulation at the time of its burial. Nor can it represent coins systematically hoarded and added to over a period of years; the gaps are too numerous. It must represent a composite hoard put together under circumstances of which we are ignorant. The first element seems to represent a hoard of about half a pound of gold put together at the beginning of the reign of Leo IV, the second a hoard of almost the same size put together under Michael II, and the third, a final half-pound of gold added under Theophilus. The total may have been intended to represent the weight of 100 solidi, the two extra ones covering the fact that many of them are a little under weight, as Bellinger has pointed out. But the final addition would represent the latest coins in circulation and there would be nothing against the hoard including an enormous preponderance of one issue over another. It cannot prove the order of issue, and the proportion of the coins in this part of the hoard must be disregarded in any attempt to settle the arrangement of the gold coinage of Theophilus.⁵⁰

Two numismatic criteria are, however, more helpful. The first is that the bust of Theophilus on the solitary specimen of Type I in the Lagbe hoard is much more youthful than that on the thirty-five specimens of Type III, and the coin itself seems more worn than the others. Both facts point to a greater antiquity for the solitary specimen. Second, solidi of Theophilus with Michael II (Type I) closely resemble coins of the reign of Michael II, both in type and iconography. Were it not for the inscription and the fact that Theophilus holds a patriarchal cross in his right hand while Michael II holds a cross potent, it would be difficult to distinguish the bust of Type I solidi from that of solidi of Michael II (fig. 4). The obverse of Type I solidi also resembles very closely the obverse of folles of

Theophilus of the type using the traditional M and an immobilized survival of a date formula on the reverse (fig. 5), which everyone agrees constituted Theophilus' first copper issue. On the other hand, the obverse of Type III solidi (figs. 7-9) finds its counterpart in the obverse of solidi of Michael III (fig. 13), rather than in the obverse of Michael II and, in its use of the loros instead of the civil dress, is iconographically related to the copper coinage of Theophilus which superseded the M type (fig. 10).

There seems little doubt, in fact, that from a stylistic and an iconographic point of view Type I solidi were issued at the beginning of the reign and formed the main issue until they were superseded by Type III solidi. This arrangement is also indicated by the fact that it would have been more logical for Theophilus to have associated his father with himself on his coinage at the beginning of his reign than for him to have introduced for a few years coins of a new type, excluding his father, and then to have abandoned them and reverted to a type of coinage, found in previous reigns, whereon the Emperor was associated with his father.

It is impossible, however, to agree with Bury that Constantine lived for less than two years and that Types I and II were both issued in 830. The solidi of Type I present a considerable number of variations.⁵¹ A period of only just over a year is too short to provide a satisfactory explanation for these.

The solution lies in the dating of the *De Cerimoniis* passage describing the triumphal celebrations of Theophilus. The rubric of the passage refers to a victory parade following a campaign against Tarsus, Mopsuestia, Adana, Irenopolis, and Anazarbus, a campaign which, on the independent evidence of Arab sources, may be dated to the spring of 831.⁵² But it

⁵¹ Out of twenty solidi of Type I at Dumbarton Oaks, ten are similar to *BMC*, no. 6 (p. 420), with a legend ending BASILEΘ, seven are similar to *BMC*, no. 7, with a legend ending BASILE'Θ, and three are similar to *BMC*, no. 10, with a legend ending BASILE'X. Of the seven listed in *BMC*, none is identical with the other. Variations in the size and facial characteristics of the bust of Constantine on the reverse are also notable.

⁵² Al Tabari tells us that Al Mamun "on hearing that the Emperor had killed some men

⁴⁹ The second iconoclastic period did not begin until 815, after the accession of Leo V.

⁵⁰ Cf. note 1 *supra*.

does not necessarily follow that the celebrations described immediately following the rubric are those following the campaign to which the rubric refers, although such is the obvious interpretation. This interpretation is incompatible with the evidence of Theophanes Continuatus concerning the promotion of Alexius Mousele to the Caesarship, for Continuatus explicitly states that the honor of Caesar was bestowed on Alexios εἰς τὸ ἔσχατον (in the very end),⁵³ the implication being that the various honors were bestowed on him gradually, not all at once. It would have been natural for some of them to have been bestowed following his betrothal and some following his marriage. The honor of Caesar being the highest, it could certainly not have been bestowed before the marriage, and even if Alexius had been betrothed in 831, as Bury proposed, he could not have been married to Maria before she was of a marriageable age, an age unobtainable before the completion of her twelfth year,⁵⁴ i.e., in early 834 at the earliest, assuming that she was the first child and that she was born early in 822. It follows that Alexius could not have been created Caesar before early 834 and that he could not, therefore, have taken part, as Caesar, in the victory parade of 831.

It could still be argued that the festivities described by Porphyrogenitus refer to the victory parade 831 and that the Caesar described as having taken part in them was not Alexius but someone else; this someone else could only have been Theophilus' own son Constantine. If Constantine was born in 823, which is quite possible, he would have been in his ninth year at the time of the 831 celebrations, and quite capable of riding a horse, though it would have been difficult for him to have done so in the Caesar's uniform described by Porphyrogenitus. But this argument also

fails to convince; for the practice of crowning the direct heir to the throne as Caesar does not seem to have been exercised in the ninth century, and the solidi of Type II, which refer to Constantine as *despotes*, suggest that he was crowned co-emperor, rather than Caesar.⁵⁵ Consequently, it would have been impossible for him to have taken part, as Caesar, in the victory parade of 831.

It seems more reasonable, therefore, to assume that Porphyrogenitus reversed the order of the festivities following each of Theophilus' two victories, and that, whilst the rubric in *De Cerimoniis* refers to the campaign of 831, the celebrations described immediately under it are those that followed the sack of Zapetra in 837. The victorious outcome of the expedition of 837 and the celebrations that followed it seem to have impressed the people far more than the border campaign and victory parade of 831,⁵⁶ and the celebrations of 837, rather than of 831, are more likely to have been those described in detail, and mistakenly used by Porphyrogenitus in the following century.

This hypothesis is also compatible with the story of Alexius Mousele given in the sources. On the basis of their evidence, Alexius could not have been married to Maria before early 834 and could not, therefore, have been Caesar in 831. But he could, and he seems to have been, Caesar in 837 when he took part in the wars against the Macedonian Slavs,⁵⁷ prior to taking charge of affairs in Sicily and the By-

in Tarsus and Mopsuestia invaded Roman territory on July 3, 831"; cf. Brooks, *op. cit.* (note 2 *supra*), 541, note 1; cf., also, Vasiliev, *op. cit.* (note 17 *supra*), 104, 288.

⁵³ *Cont.*, 108.

⁵⁴ It is so stated in both the Isaurian *Ecloga* and in the Macedonian *Epanagoge*; cf. Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Jus Graeco-Romanum*, IV (1865), 8 and 65. Bury's assumption that Maria could not have been married before she was fourteen (*op. cit.* [note 11 *supra*], 466) is, consequently, incorrect.

⁵⁵ The coronation of Constantine may have been the one described in *De Cerimoniis*, (Bonn ed., I, chap. 38b; ed. by A. Vogt, II, 3-4), as Ostrogorsky and Stein (*op. cit.* [note 38 *supra*], 194ff., 199, 231, 233) have suggested. Vogt's subsequent criticism (*op. cit.* [note 8 *supra*], 2ff. and 13) does not invalidate this suggestion. The coronation may have taken place on the Feast of Pentecost in 830, i.e., in June of that year, a date mistakenly given in the chronicle of Symeon Logothetes as the date of the coronation of Theophilus with Theodora, both of whom had already been crowned during Michael II's reign (cf. *CMG*, 790; *CMG-M*, 700; *LeoG*, 313-4; *Melit.*, 147; and *S.Mag.*, 625).

⁵⁶ *CMG*, 798-9; *CMG-M*, 707; *LeoG*, 221; *Melit.*, 152; *S.Mag.*, 634.

⁵⁷ F. Dvornik, "La vie de Saint Grégoire le Decapolite et les Slaves macédoniens au IX^e siècle," *Travaux publiés par l'Institut des Études Slaves*, V (1926), 35ff.; cf. also H. Grégoire's comments in *Byzantion*, 9 (1934), 785.

zantine West in the spring of 838.⁵⁸ It is not known for sure whether Alexius took part in the eastern campaign of 837, but his participation in the celebrations that followed its victorious outcome is almost certain.

Although Maria, if born early in 822,⁵⁹ could have been married early in 834, her marriage at that date would have depended upon many interrelated events occurring within a very tight time limitation, and it does not seem very likely that this happened. It appears more probable that Maria's marriage did not take place very long before Alexius was elevated to the position of Caesar; and since we have no evidence indicating that Alexius was Caesar much before 837, it is safer to assume that their marriage was celebrated in 836, as Bury suggested.

The elevation of Alexius to the Caesarship following his marriage to Maria suggests that Constantine may have been dead by that time. The actual date of his death cannot be worked out, but it does not seem unreason-

able to assume that Theophilus would have mourned his son for at least a year before he celebrated the marriage of his daughter. If this assumption is correct, and if, therefore, Maria's marriage did not take place before 836, the death of Constantine could be dated to 835 at the latest. The possibility that he died earlier cannot be excluded, but in view of the number and variety of coins of Type I, it could not have occurred much earlier.

The absence of Maria from solidi of Type IV could be because, as Ostrogorsky has suggested, she was married, or because, as Bury held,⁶⁰ she was dead. Type IV solidi may have been struck to commemorate the 837 victory of Theophilus, in which case Ostrogorsky's explanation should be preferred, for Maria seems to have been alive early in 838 when Alexius, her husband, was asked to take command of the wars in the West. However, the solidi in question may have been struck to commemorate some subsequent event, perhaps the birth of Michael III, in which case Bury's explanation would be preferable, for by that time Maria apparently was dead. The fact is that on the basis of available evidence the date of the issue of Type IV solidi cannot be precisely determined.

On the basis of what has been shown above, the following chronology may be arrived at:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Coinage</i>
829, Oct.	Theophilus succeeds as sole emperor	
829-ca. 834/5		Type I solidi
830, June 5	Coronation of Constantine	Type II solidi; commemorative issue
834/5	Death of Constantine	
834/5-842		Type III solidi
836	Marriage of Maria to Alexius Mousele, who is elevated to the rank of Caesar	
837 (spring)	Theophilus sacks Zapetra; victory celebrations in Constantinople	Possible commemorative issue of Type IV solidi
837 (late)	Alexius Mousele in Macedonia	
838 (spring)	Alexius Mousele in Sicily; death of Maria	
838 (late July)	Birth of Michael	Possible commemorative issue of Type IV solidi
838, Sept. 1	Coronation of Michael III	Commemorative issue of Type V solidi
838 (late)	Alexius Mousele recalled from the West	
842, Jan. 20	Death of Theophilus; accession of Michael III.	

⁵⁸ Cf. p. 355, *supra*.

⁵⁹ It is not impossible that Constantine may have been the first-born child of Theophilus and that Maria may have been the second, in which case she could not have been born before early 823 and could not have completed her twelfth year before early 835.

⁶⁰ Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.* (note 29 *supra*), 185.



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2.



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11.

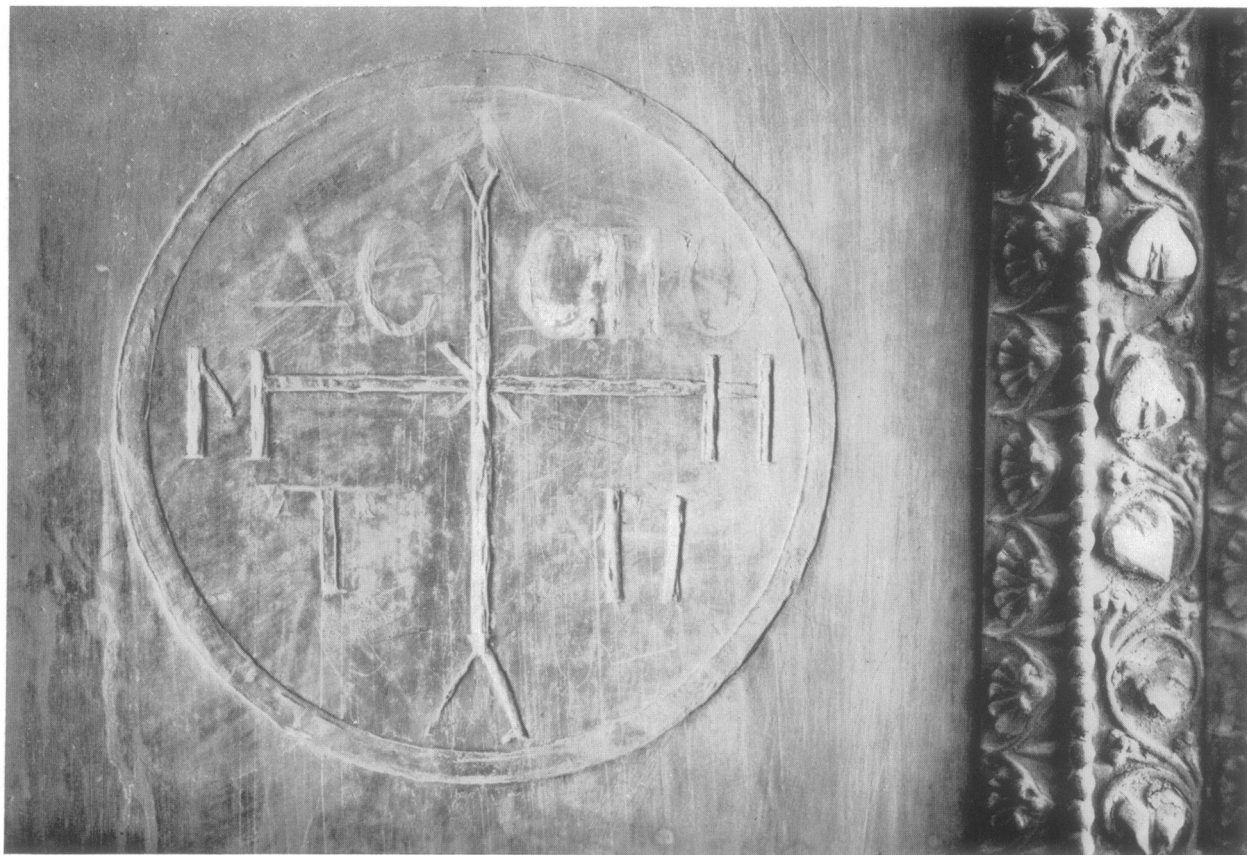


12.



13.

1,2. Solidi of Theophilus, Type I. 3. Silver Imitation of Solidus of Theophilus, Type I.
 4. Solidus of Michael II, obv. 5. M Follis of Theophilus, rev. 6. Solidus of Theophilus, Type II.
 7,8. Solidi of Theophilus, Type III. 9. Semissis of Theophilus, Type III. 10. M Follis of Theophilus, rev. 11. Solidus of Theophilus, Type IV.
 12. Solidus of Theophilus, Type V. 13. Solidus of Michael III, obv.



14. Monogram of Michael III



15. Date Monogram

Constantinople, St. Sophia, *Horologion*, Bronze Doors. Details of Silver Inlaid Monograms